

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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Becket Select Board member Michael Lavery, left, makes a purchase during the grand opening of Canna Corner from Assistant General Manager Laurie Glosteron Sunday, March 7. See story on page 10.

Photo courtesy of Michael Lavery

## WESTHAMPTON

# STM passes Public Safety Complex

By Shelby Macri

After almost three hours town voters voted in favor of the proposal to construct a new public safety complex at a special town meeting on Saturday, March 6.

Voters packed into

Hampshire Regional High School's parking lot in their cars to participate in a vote which required a two-third's majority to pass; there were 221 yes votes, 69 no votes, and one undecided vote allowing the construction plans move on to the ballot

vote Saturday, March 13.

The last time the Safety Complex Building was brought up to the town it passed the two-thirds vote, but not the ballot vote, Selectboard Chair Philip Dowling is hoping that the plans for the new building

will pass this time around.

When the ballot vote was counted and announced that the building plans passed, Dowling shouted in excitement and threw his arms in the air, excited the

COMPLEX, page 12

## WORTHINGTON

# Remembering race day five decades later

By Peter Spotts

In 1971, the Jones Lot on Old Post Road filled the calm hilltown air with the noise of

nearly 300 modified snowmobiles taking to the snowy track in front of 7,000 fans on March 6 and 7.

It was the first Eastern

Snowmobile Race sanctioned by the United States Snowmobile Association in the local area, and riders competed for a \$10,000 purse.



Bobby Dodge, left, Ned Jalbert, Jeff Leupold, and Ken Needham gathered for the 50th anniversary of the USSA Eastern Snowmobile Races in Worthington. The men gathered with some of their vintage sleds across the street from the Jones Lot, where the 1971 races occurred.

Photo by Peter Spotts

"It was a pretty big deal at the time," said Ned Jalbert, who was the announcer for the first weekend in March race. "The biggest flaw was not being able to hear the announcing. You could hear when the sleds weren't running."

People from around the region flocked to the town for that weekend. Residents, like then 11-year-old Bobby Dodge, were treated to a once in a lifetime experience in their own hometown backyard with more people in town than he'd ever seen in his life.

RACE, page 8

## HAMPSHIRE

# Course failure rates improving

By Peter Spotts

Student failure rates were a major concern at the end of first quarter and with second quarter numbers in, the numbers improved as administration continues to work and find ways to help students.

Hampshire Regional Principal Kristen Smidy reported to the School Committee the total number of failed courses in the second quarter was 254, down from 310 in the first quarter at its meeting on Monday, March. 1. However, historically, the second quarter has usually had an increase in course

FAILURE, page 13

## WILLIAMSBURG

# Residents inquire about PSC plan

By Peter Spotts

Residents focused on finding out why the Helen E. James School lot is the only viable location in town for a new public safety complex at the informational meeting hosted by the Owner's Project Manager Steering Committee on Wednesday, March 3.

There were 42 attendees in the Zoom call with multiple residents inquiring about the why existing public safety building sites were ruled out. Resident Jennifer Black was asked what reasons ruled out the current

PSC, page 13

## HILLTOWNS

# Hilltown Voices supports victims

By Peter Spotts

The Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence Task Force is launching a new initiative inspired by the successful Prayer Flags campaign they run annually this month.

Looking to be more inclusive for people, particularly those who may not be as religious as others, the new Hilltown Voices outreach project looks to build on the prayer flags concept

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# HILLTOWNS

## Donate, don't toss textiles

The average US citizen throws away 81 pounds of clothing a year. Ninety-five percent of those textiles whether worn or torn can be recycled, yet only 15% gets donated or recycled. The remaining 85% goes to landfills.

The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative reminds residents that any clothing or household textile, as long as it is dry and has no odor, can be reused and recycled. Even if the item is overly worn or out-of-date, do not toss it away. Rather, place it in the Salvation Army bins located at each of the HRMC member town transfer stations.

Residents may also deliver clean and dry textiles and clothing to donation centers and drop-off boxes for Goodwill Industries and the Salvation Army. Acceptable items include mismatched socks, shoes and gloves, all clothing and accessories including belts, ties, underwear, purses; and linens such as curtains, toss pillows (not bed pillows, unless new), light comforters (no heavy quilts), sheets, and towels. Some animal shelters accept old sheets, blankets, pillowcases, bedspreads, and towels for reuse — call first to check if it's okay.

When recycling clothing, 45% is

re used as apparel; 30% of the recovered textiles are cut into wiping rags or polishing cloths that are then used in commercial and industrial settings; 20% is reprocessed into its basic fiber content. The fibers are then remanufactured to create furniture stuffing, upholstery, home insulation, automobile soundproofing, carpet padding, building materials and various other products.

Typically, 5% is unusable. If the textiles are wet, moldy, or contaminated with solvents, they are not fit for recycling and are discarded.

In addition to helping reduce the amount of clothing and textile products going into landfills, there are other environmental benefits to textile reuse and recycling such as reducing pollution when textiles are incinerated and reducing the use of chemicals and the wastewater used in the manufacturing of new clothing.

The HRMC asks for hilltown residents to do their part and don't toss textiles. For more information on recycling, visit [www.hrmc-ma.org](http://www.hrmc-ma.org).

HRMC member Towns include Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

## Phase 2 vaccinations available

The local health departments of Hampshire County are pleased to share information about COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Hampshire County.

For years, the county been working together to establish plans for public health emergencies including mass dispensing. Strong partnerships, annual exercises, and robust stockpile of supplies have proved to be extremely useful in current response efforts. Recently, local first responders including police, fire, EMS, and dispatchers throughout Hampshire County were vaccinated. An effective clinic model to vaccinate members of the community safely and efficiently has been established.

Although health departments would like to offer as many different locations as possible, the COVID-19 vaccine storage, handling, administration and reporting requirements are significantly more complex than a traditional flu vaccine clinic. As a result, all vaccination sites will serve multiple communities from a region and must meet very specific requirements in order to receive vaccine. At this time, Hampshire County has two regional COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Hampshire County —The Bangs Community Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst and The Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton.

The Department of Public Health has developed a vaccine distribu-

tion timeline and it can be found at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov). Both Amherst and Northampton sites have committed to provide vaccine distribution throughout all phases of the Commonwealth's roll-out plan. Individuals who are eligible to receive the vaccine will be able to register via a link on the city websites [www.amherstcovid19.org](http://www.amherstcovid19.org) or [www.northamptonma.gov/vaccineclinics](http://www.northamptonma.gov/vaccineclinics).

Additional clinics will be scheduled during the coming weeks based upon weekly federal and state allotments and will follow the phased guidelines as defined by The Department of Public Health. Eligible individuals can register online for an appointment. A second dose of the Moderna vaccine will be offered on or after 28 days later to anyone who receives their first dose at the clinics. If individuals need assistance with online registration, please call 413-587-1219 for Northampton or 413-259-2425 for Amherst and leave a detailed message. A health department representative will get respond within two business days.

Please note that the vaccine is free to individuals and is being provided to the states by the federal government. Sites can bill for a small administration fee to cover the cost of running clinic and insurance information will be requested. However, no person will be turned away due to lack of insurance.

## Relief Fund available to businesses

The Hilltown CDC announced businesses, nonprofits, artists, and farmers in the Hilltowns may apply for small grants up to \$15,000 for suffering a financial impact due to COVID-19.

The grant is open to any business located in the hilltowns, even if the business owner doesn't live in the hilltowns. Grant applications can be obtained on the Hilltown CDC's website at [www.hilltowncdc.org](http://www.hilltowncdc.org) or by contacting Michele Kenney, program coordinator, at [michelek@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:michelek@hilltowncdc.org) or 413-354-1055.

The Hilltown COVID Relief Fund is available to businesses, nonprofits, artists, and farmers in the towns of Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Granville,

Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Peru, Plainfield, Russell, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington.

For more information, contact Michele Kenney at [michelek@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:michelek@hilltowncdc.org)

Senator Adam Hinds worked with Executive Director Dave Christopolis to secure \$250,000 in the State budget to provide additional support for the rural Hilltowns of Massachusetts. Due to Hind's advocacy, Hilltown CDC received \$250,000 to provide much needed financial relief to the region. Hilltown CDC will administer \$150,000 of the fund and \$100,000 of the funding will be administered by the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association.

## Hinds leads post-pandemic reimagining

On Thursday, March 4, State Senator Adam G. Hinds (D-Pittsfield) chaired the first meeting of the newly created Special Massachusetts State Senate Committee on Reimagining Massachusetts: Post Pandemic Resiliency. The Committee will examine weaknesses in areas of the Commonwealth that were exposed due to the pandemic and how to adapt to create a more resilient and equitable Commonwealth.

"We are simultaneously grappling with the inequalities that COVID has highlighted in terms of health outcomes and economic insecurity, while understanding the changing nature of work, telemedicine, and our downtowns," Hinds said. "We all feel the urgency to not merely recover from COVID, we have a real opportunity to create a stronger economy,

society and Commonwealth."

He added, "The future of work is a critical aspect of life to reimagine in a post-pandemic Commonwealth. We are considering how to re-envision workforce training and supporting workers and businesses alike as remote work has become much more common in the past year."

Chaired by Senator Hinds, who also serves as the Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Revenue, was appointed by Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland) to this newly created committee.

The Committee agreed to conduct ongoing listening sessions throughout the Commonwealth with topical experts and regional input. The Committee will work to release findings and recommendations regularly during the course of its work.

## Personal home care training available free

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs has officially launched its free, online Personal Home Care Aide Training for Homemakers.

This training is for individuals who want to work as homemakers, and covers the topics and skills necessary to become a Homemaker for individuals enrolled in the state's home care program. It includes 11 self-paced modules and is about 37 hours long. The course can be taken on a laptop or desktop computer, a tablet, or a phone.

After students successfully complete this training, they can print out a certificate to share with their Home Care Agency employer. By making this curriculum accessible to all, EOEA hopes to bring more people into these important professions, increase the number of homemakers in the workforce, and help alleviate the wait time for consumers needing this important service.

The training can be found at [www.mass.gov/home-care-aide-training-phcast](http://www.mass.gov/home-care-aide-training-phcast).

phcast.

There are two enrollment options for students who use this training. Students who are new to the field should register with the following join code: LTYBGP (upper-case letters only) at [elderaffairs.instructure.com/register](http://elderaffairs.instructure.com/register) and enroll to complete the entire course,

Students who are already work in home care and are interested in taking some of the modules as a refresher, should register with the following join code: F9BLRB (upper-case letters only) at the same link.

This new online course is the steppingstone to a career path that includes Personal Care Homemaker, Home Health Aide, and other health care professions. During 2021, EOEA plans to translate the online PHCAST Homemaker Training into both Spanish and Haitian Creole. They will also begin the work of converting the next level training for PC Homemaker into the same online format in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.

## SUPPORT

with written messages from community members supporting victims of domestic violence.

"We're asking people to just write a message, some uplifting message, in support of healthy relationships or support survivors of domestic violence," SHDVT Coordinator Monica Moran said. "This is for anybody. Some of the prayer flags, people who don't identify as religious so to speak, might not want to participate in that."

Participation is simple and easy. Anyone can write a message and take a picture of themselves holding it. If they don't want to be in the video, they can sign it and take a picture of the sign instead. After that, send in the pictures to [southernhillsvdvtaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:southernhillsvdvtaskforce@gmail.com).

"One of the things we try to do as a task force...we try to create ways that everybody in the community can be a part of this effort," Moran said.

Moran said they plan to make mul-

tipl posts per week with signs people send it. Posts will begin the week of March 22. Signs can be sent in any time before or after postings start; they will all be shared online at some point.

Since the COVID-19 shutdowns began almost a full calendar year ago, Moran said the conditions and stress caused by the pandemic have amplified domestic violence intensity. While COVID-19 doesn't turn someone into an abuser, it can make those who already abuse others even more violent.

"There's many people who endure extreme stress and never harm anyone," she said. "People who are prone to abuse, it's gotten more intense and more common, but if you're someone who has the belief system that I'm never going to harm another person, you're not going to start harming someone because of covid."

She added, "What I am hearing from Hilltown Safety At Home is that the

number of people who need help and the intensity of people who need help is up."

Hilltown Safety At Home Domestic Violence Advocate Mary Krol said the beginning of covid shutdowns last March was quiet initially, but around May calls began to pick up. The biggest issues she ran into trying to help people was finding permanent housing, food, and getting them referred into programs for people looking to get away from abuse and also navigate the issues COVID-19 has caused when it comes to meeting in person.

"That was the hard part was getting them out of the hotels and into permanent housing. That was more so the issue in the summer, from like May to probably August, that was the biggest issue," Krol said. "For me, I used to be able to go meet them wherever they were without having to worry too much. Now it's like you can't got here, you can't go to the courts, you can't be in the car with

them...I had to get really creative with how to meet with them."

Whether it's parking lots or other open locations where it's safe to meet and talk while observing COVID-19 safety protocols, Krol said she's been finding ways to meet and help people during the pandemic.

"Wherever I could go where I could meet them and be outside, having a conversation, and helping them I would do," she said. "It's been really hard... We've been able to provide services and help to a lot of people."

There's been an ebb and flow of need during the past year, but January and February are starting to trend up again. While she anticipates March will keep rising, Krol hopes warmer weather in the summer will see the need and calls go down.

Anyone who wants someone to talk to or thinks they may need help can contact Krol, call or text, at 413-693-9977.

*from page 1*



## HILLTOWNS

# Local groups partner for virtual parent café March 24

The Hilltown Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Council is inviting the community to a virtual Parent Café on Wednesday, March 24, at 6 p.m.

Through a collaboration with Hilltown Community Health Centers' Family Center, Behavioral Health Network, New England Farmworkers, the Gateway Regional School District and It Takes A Village, this is an evening devoted to parents. Here is an opportunity to share stories, learn about some local resources, and strategies to stay sane during this time.

In other times, Parent Cafes have been a fun night out for parents- complete with dinner and childcare and often lively discussion. As with so much of people's lives that have been impacted by COVID-19, this one will look a little dif-

ferent. There will still be opportunities to engage with each other and parent educators- and to laugh a little, but participants will have to bring their own dinner.

Many people have "Zoom fatigue", and that has an effect on physical and mental health, in and of itself. HCFCEC wants to have a convivial and engaging evening with conversation and brief presentations. Mostly, they want hear parents' stories, talk about some coping strategies and share some local resources to make parents' lives a little easier.

The evening will begin with one of the Senior Family Partners from Behavioral Health Network. She lives in the hilltowns and will share a bit of her journey, along with some things that she and others in her organization have learned. This will be followed by brief "tabletop" chats facilitated by the health

center, New England Farmworkers, and It Takes A Village — all of whom will share some resources and strategies we have to help take us through the wild ride of parenting.

New England Farmworkers Council is a multi- faceted human services agency dedicated to improving the quality of life for people throughout the north-east. Among its chief programs are home energy assistance, childcare resources, emergency shelter, employment and job training and youth programs.

Behavioral Health Network is a regional provider of comprehensive behavioral health services for adults, children and families. Among its many programs for families are the Intensive Care Coordination and Community Partner programs.

Hilltown Community Health

Centers' Family Support program is home to the Hilltown Family Center and many other community programs and services. Its community programs can connect and empower families with resources, education, and assistance.

It Takes A Village provides postpartum support and home visits to families with babies. It hosts the Village Closet, located in Huntington, a free resource for clothing and toys.

This program is a collaboration of Hilltown Community Health Centers' Family Support program, the Behavioral Health Network, New England Farmworkers and It Takes A Village.

To get the Zoom link or for more information, contact Kim Savery at 413-685-3500 or ksavery@hchcweb.org. Don't hesitate to contact for the link right before the event.

## HUNTINGTON

# Election nomination papers available

HUNTINGTON — The 2021 Huntington Municipal Election will be held Saturday, May 15.

The following offices will be voted on at this election: Board of Selectmen, Town Clerk, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Regional School Committee, Water/Sewer Commissioners, Whiting Street Fund Trustee, Huntington Library Trustee, Tree Warden, Moderator, Alphonso P. Pettis Fund Trustee, and Constable.

If someone is interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, they must take out nomination papers. Interested candidates will then need a

minimum of 20 signatures of registered voters in Huntington in order to submit the papers for certification.

Nomination Papers are currently available for pick up, by appointment only, from the Town Clerk on Wednesday evenings. Please contact townclerk@huntingtonma.us to make an appointment. The deadline to pick up Nomination Papers is Wednesday, March 17 at 5 p.m.

The deadline for candidates to submit nomination papers to Registrars of Voters via the Town Clerk for certification of signatures is Wednesday, March 24, at 5 p.m.

## NORWICH HILL

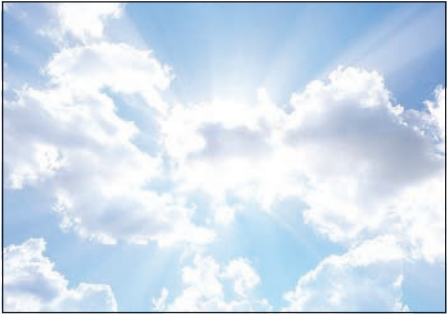
The First Congregational Church of Huntington reminds everyone even though our physical doors are closed until further notice, we are most definitely open for worship, praise, ministry, and fellowship. We are an Open and Affirming Church inviting, welcoming, and affirming everyone — seekers, believers, and wonderers alike — on their journey of faith, to join in 10 a.m. Zoom Sunday worship.

Our reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, John 3:14-21, invites us into an ancient story to wonder about Grace in the difficult places of our lives. Please remember that we "spring ahead" as we turn our clocks one hour forward this Sunday.

The pastor is always available to speak with you. If you do not receive our emails and would like to connect with our Zoom worship service and/or fellowship time, please contact Pastor Carol at firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.

com to receive the information you will need to participate or send us a message on Facebook.

Please use the phone numbers and email address provided to stay in touch or to contact the pastor. You are also invited to find us on Facebook at "Norwich Hill" for updates, information, and spiritual encouragement. For more information, please contact 413-667-3935 or 860-798-7771 or firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com.



## GOSHEN

# Caucus convenes Monday, March 15

GOSHEN — The 2021 Town Caucus will be held on Monday, March 15, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall. All registered voters are invited to participate. Any town resident may be nominated for any of the positions below.

Voters will be asked to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer before entering the town hall. Social distancing and other safety precautions will be in place.

The following positions are up for nomination and the individuals who currently occupy the seats:

Almoners, three-year term, Kristine Bissell; Assessors, three-year term, Gina

Papineau; Board of Health, Chesterfield-Goshen Regional School Committee, three-year term, Barton Gage; Finance Committee, three-year term, Angela Otis; Finance Committee, two-year term, currently vacant; Library Trustees, two seats for three-year terms, Rosemarie Clark and Miriam Kurland; Planning Board, five-year term, Lisa Newman; Planning Board, two-year term, currently vacant; Selectboard, three-year term, Angela Otis; Tilton Farm Supervisors, three one-year terms, Roger Culver, Robert Gross, and Richard Polwrek; Town Clerk, three-year term, Kristen Estelle.

### A PERFECT PAIR



A pair of deer sheds found by the Hilltown Hikers while exploring in Huntington. Submitted photo

## CUMMINGTON

# Clarissa Pollard earns Dean's List

CUMMINGTON — Clarissa Pollard was named to the St. Lawrence University's Dean's List for her academic achievements during the Fall 2020 semester.



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Send cover letter and resume to:  
Russell Library Trustees,  
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Deadline for receipt is April 2.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

In My Backyard

By Ellenor Downer

A Barre resident called to report he has a northern mockingbird and a Carolina wren visiting his yard.



The northern mockingbird is the only mockingbird commonly found in North America. They are primarily permanent residents, but birds in the north may move south short distances during harsh weather. It is about eight to 10 inches long. It is a gray bird, with a long tail and white underbelly. It has a dark eye line and two white wing bars and dark wing tips and tail.

The female lays three to four and sometimes up to six greenish to blue gray eggs with brown spots. They build the nest in dense shrub or tree, usually about three to 10 feet above the ground. The male builds most of the foundation and the female puts in the lining. The nest has a bulky foundation of twigs, supporting an open of weeds, grass, leaves lined with fine material such as rootlets, moss, animal hair or plant down. The female incubates the eggs, but both parents feed the young. The young leave the nest about 12 days after hatching. Mockingbirds have two to three broods per year.

Mockingbirds feed mainly on insects and berries. It feeds mainly on insects in late spring and summer and relies on berries and fruit in fall and winter.

The mockingbird was often captured for sale as a pet from the late 1700s to the early 1900s. As a result, it became scarce along much of the northern edge of its range. After the stopping of the cage bird trade, mockingbirds became common once again. The planting of multiflora rose, also known as living fence, was partly responsible for its spread in the northeast as mockingbirds liked the berries and used it for nesting sites.

Belchertown bluebirds

A Belchertown woman emailed about bluebirds. She said, “Just this winter, we have counted as many as nine bluebirds at once around our feeder and have them in our yard, gardens and woods at all times of the year.” Several people are reporting seeing bluebirds. They are always a welcome sight and in the sunlight, the blue is so vivid.

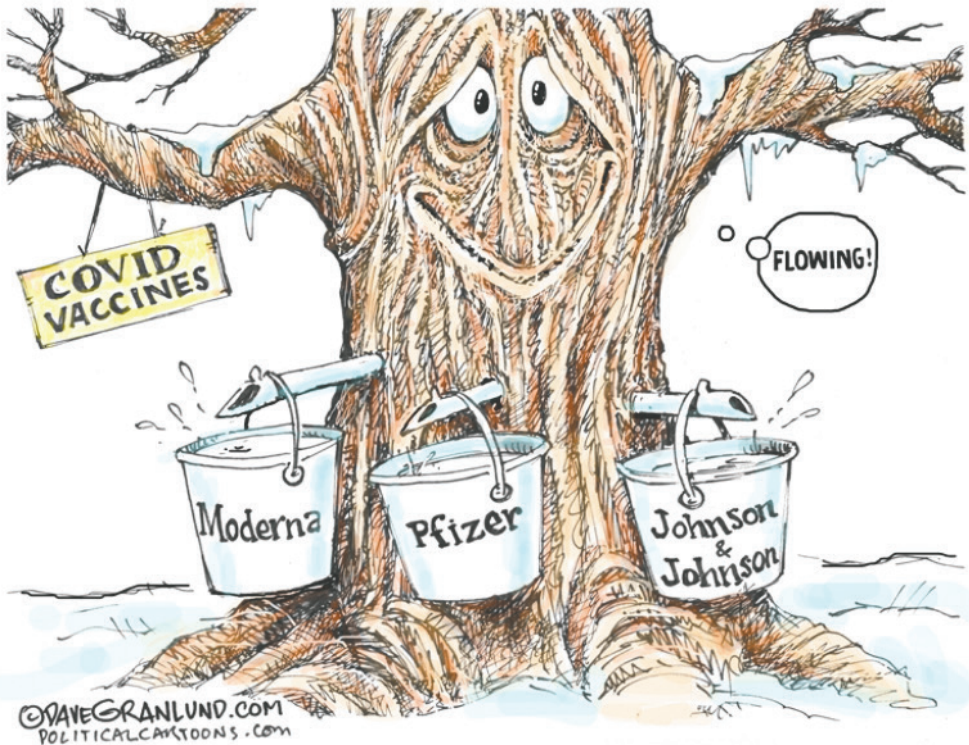
Carolina wren

I also have a Carolina wren, which comes to my feeders regularly. Early this week, it was eating seeds off the ground. A bluejay landed on the ground near it. Often, the smaller birds leave when the bluejays come, but not this wren. It held its ground and the bluejay did not chase it away.

Bird watching

My cat, Rocky, likes to the watch the birds and squirrels at the feeders. If I ask him if he wants to watch the birds, he reaches up for me to pick him up and bring him to the window. This is a morning ritual with us. Today, there was a red squirrel under the tray feeder. He especially likes to watch the juncos.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Listen to wildlife biologist not activists

On March 2, 2021, I called my Mass. State Senator and asked why he was sponsoring an anti-fur sale bill in our legislature. He replied that selling fur and trapping were both inhumane. I then called Mass. Fish and Wildlife in Dalton. A wildlife biologist told me that trapping and hunting is a wise use of a natural resources and were supported by Mass. Division of Fish and Wildlife biologist.

I cannot understand why the hunting and cage trapping of raccoon, coyote, bobcat, fisher, and beaver is inhumane. I believe that selling fur legally taken during the fall and winter could supplement the income of outdoors persons during these hard times. In

2002, the humane conibear trap was banned by our voters and legislatures, who were deliberately lied to by animal rights extremist groups! Our Mass. Division of Fish and Wildlife biologists were forbidden by state law from explaining that hunting raccoon and trapping beaver was “farmer friendly” and prevented disease in our drinking water. We have come to a time when poorly educated animal rights extremists are trying to mismanage our wildlife resource. Instead of throwing blood on women wearing fur coats, these extremists are trying to ban the sale of fur so it cannot be worn.

Bill Hardie  
Russell

GUEST COLUMN

To Buy a Pair of Shoes

By Anne Sabo Warner

Goshen 1938. I was six years old. I had always had plenty of clothes because I was the youngest of four girls. Hand-me-down shoes, however, were usually on their last legs (excuse the pun) by the time they got to me. The pair I wore had lost their stitches and my toes stuck out. One sole was held on by a rubber band. I tried to hide this because new shoes cost money, and though my parents never shared money problems with us, we certainly knew spending money was a big deal. My father had strips of leather and a shoemaker’s last, and had soled and heeled many a pair of shoes, but mine were beyond redemption. What to do. We had a Sears Roebuck catalog, but it was largely a wish-book. You would have to trace a foot pattern on a piece of paper, walk or get a ride to the Post Office and buy a money order, walk back to pick them up when they arrived, and — if they didn’t fit — take them back to the Post Office and pay return postage. This was quickly voted down. The next option was Harry Lapidès’ Rolling Dry Goods. Mr. Lapidès traveled the hilltowns in a big green van, stopping by every couple of weeks to see if something was needed. The next time he came my father asked about shoes for me and Mr. Lapidès had a couple of pairs in my size. However, they were what would be nowadays called hightops—shoes that came up around the ankles. They were “baby shoes” and I hated them. I was afraid to say so, but the look on my face was enough. My father just shook his head, and the shoes went back into the big green van.

Days later my brother asked a friend with a car to take us Down Below. Down Below was foreign territory encompassing Williamsburg and points south. We set off one evening down the hill to

Webster Brook, taking Hathaway Road, which at the time was a shortcut to South Main Street. It was a narrow dirt road, all

roads were dirt at the time, or more accurately pure mud — it was spring. Cars of the day had narrow tires which helped considerably to make ruts so deep that cars got stuck. After a short distance we were mired to the hubcaps. There was much revving and rocking and pushing. I huddled in the back seat trying not to cry. Things just got worse, so the boys gave up and we left the car and hiked back up the hill to phone for help. I’m not sure what the help was, but I suspect it involved horses. Farmers of the day who had horses delighted in hauling automobiles out of such predicaments. My brother’s friend no longer offered a ride because it turned out he had borrowed the car and probably didn’t even have a driver’s license.

I don’t remember if my father had a car at the time, but if he did it was used for necessary things like getting to work and certainly not for shopping for a pair of shoes. We would never have thought to ask him, but no other offers were coming forth. Summer was coming, but we didn’t go barefoot on the farm — too many hazards. Besides, we went to church and attended community events, both of which required shoes. And eventually I would need them for school. Finally, my oldest sister, who had graduated from high school and gotten a job, recruited one of her CCC friends with a car (Civilian Conservation Corps — created for jobs for young men during the Depression), and on her day off they took me down below. I don’t remember exactly where, but it was a dusty store lined with shelves full of clothing where a kindly gentleman fitted me with a pair of brown leather lace-up low top shoes. I suspect my sister paid for them. The shoes pleased me greatly. I wore them every day — only pair I had — and tried to stay out of the mud. I outgrew them in a year.

Anne Sabo Warner is a former Goshen resident who currently resides in Enfield, Connecticut.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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OPINION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*This letter is in response to “Highway Dept. works one short,” The Country Journal, March 4.*

In 1978-79, the town voted to support and build a sewer plant that has been in use since then, and it was said at the time that the roughly 210 sewer users could not support it in the years ahead. It passed and completed around 1979-80. It was run under the select board at the time. In 1986, the select board turned it over to the Water District Commission to form the water-sewer commission. Late in 1986, early 1987, all three commissioners quit the board.

I was asked to be on the board along with two others, and have been on ever since except for three years. Through these years many projects have been completed. Through the years the Department of Environmental Protection has been

Sewer history and my time on the board

consistently making new regulations for both water and sewer. A roughly \$190,000 sewer budget for 210 users to support is ridiculous. We have one of, if not the highest, user rates. With the plant being 41-years-old, manned seven days a week, with all the new DEP rules, it is making it now impossible to keep making these adjustments with only sewer users paying for it.

As of now, there is approximately \$100,000 worth of upgrades to be done. On the water side, it must be manned for two hours a day, seven days a week for testing. With a water budget of approximately \$125,000 a year and Kathy only hired for approximately 10 hours a week, we are now notified by the select board that her hours were increased, and we now have to pay a portion of her insurance as well without being notified. All mainte-

nance and breaks to the 121-year-old system are very costly. We have been helped through the years by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, which has gotten grants to do upgrades. There has been roughly \$2 million in grants in the last 10 years, which there is no way 309 water users could afford, along with the thousands more they want in improvements.

As commissioners, we saved on an electrical bid of \$17,100; we did it for \$4,000 and on a piping bid of \$21,188, we did it for \$4,681.04, with a local electrician and a local pipe company. So as far as the Chairman of the select board saying, “these guys are doing absolutely nothing,” it’s total hogwash. Had he come to us, this could have turned out different. We are not the highest paid board members as there are two different departments, not just one.

There is plenty of documentation showing our meetings, and this year with a letter from the select board dated March 3, 2020, saying “all boards/committees should only meet if absolutely necessary.” We did meet through emails.

There have been lots of stuff done through the past years as they would have seen. So, with that said and with 32 years in, I will be resigning immediately as well as at least one other commissioner; the third has yet to decide. It looks like Kathy and the select board can run the department, then they will see what really goes on. They want to slam us in the paper for hearsay, so be it. There could have been a different look at it had the select board came to us and not had a private meeting without notifying us.

**Charles Dazelle**  
*Huntington Sewer Commission*

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Wild Irish Workers

By Deborah Daniels

“I’ve been a wild rover, for many these years. No nay never, no nay never, no nay never no more.” So goes the song “The Wild Rover” about Irish navvies, immigrant laborers. It may be hard to believe but the Hilltowns once swarmed with Irish rovers. The years leading up to the opening of the Western Railroad in Chester in 1841 was home to these workers. Who were these Irish laborers come to build a railroad in the woods?

To begin with most of these immigrants were driven out of Ireland by poverty and a lack of opportunity to work or to ever own land in their home country. Immigration records show there were 207,381 Irish immigrants who came to America in 1831 to 1840 and this figure jumped to 780,719 from 1841 to 1850. The great potato famine of 1845 to 1852, where millions of Irish people starved to death was the final calamity to drive an Irish exodus. This triggered whole families to leave Ireland, whereas earlier it was mainly single men who came to America. They came to find hope and a job and for many to send money back to their families. These men would have had to have enough money to pay steerage passage on a ship to America. They were unlikely to be well educated because before 1830 Irish families had to pay to attend school. The national government sponsored schools didn’t come about until the 1830s. So here they were, 14 to 35-year-olds, alone with no money in a new world looking for work; clearing the land and laying wooden ties was work they could do.

And here in New England where was the labor force to build a railroad when the local population was occupied with farming? Who wanted to clear trees and move rock and mountain to build a railroad for some unknown financial bankers? Not the local populace. Never mind the basic questions local people had about what is a train and what does it do for us? The railroads needed large numbers of laborers. They offered a steady paycheck. There was no “Irish Need Not Apply” sign out front. So, the Irish became prodigious diggers, earth shifters, tree cutters, and pickaxe men breaking down rock that was shoveled onto oxcarts and wheelbarrows and hauled away. They carved a path through the woods and over rivers under the direction of Major George Washington Whistler, chief engineer. Was it his military background that promoted a regimental lifestyle for these rovers? The Irish learned to work very effectively in teams.

These men developed muscles of iron and palms like leather dancing their shovels through the landscape. Their day

was likely to be sunup to sundown, 10 hours of hard labor. What were living conditions like? For building the transcontinental railroad, built from 1863 to 1869 laying 1,912 miles of track, workers lived in canvas camps alongside the track or in wooden bunkhouses. So, the Irish workers on the Western Railroad probably lived in local housing or in similar bunkhouses. Diseases such as dysentery and cholera were common among the transcontinental workers because of poor sanitation. Too often the local stream was both the latrine and bath for workers. No records were kept of illnesses due to poor sanitation at the time. What helped protect the Irish from water borne disease was drinking boiled tea with meals. Also protective was the access to fresh food from nearby farms and recently slaughtered meat. The Hilltowns’ good country living paid big dividends keeping workers healthy. Most workers on the Transcontinental RR had board included in their paycheck, typically \$35 per month, guaranteeing no chance of an underfed worker. However, meat and water suffered from being transported great distances. Incidentally the Chinese railroad workers on the Transcontinental Railroad brought their own live pigs, chickens and goats with them to use for meal prep and were paid \$27 per month without board. Was bringing your own fresh food worth the pay cut?

There was a very unfortunate incident of death by prejudice at Duffy’s Cut. This occurred at a stretch of railroad track that was built in 1832 for the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad. Contractor Philip Duffy hired 57 Irish immigrants to lay line through densely wooded hills and ravine west of Philadelphia. Three of the workers died of cholera and were given a proper burial. Within two months, all 57 were dead of “cholera,” less than two months after their arrival. They were buried in a shallow grave beside the track without any death certificates issued or funeral celebration. After careful research about this incident much later, human bones were discovered in 2009. Some showed evidence of death by trauma. Amtrak stopped further mass grave excavation citing proximity to the live train track, all on their property. It was theorized that local vigilantes murdered the rest of the Irish workers because they feared the spread of cholera to their own townspeople — see photo of the monument to these Irish workers. Do you think Major Whistler was aware of this tragedy? He was considered the top authority on building railroads and locomotives at the time. Did you know he teamed up with his brother-in-law, a fellow engineer, William Gibbs McNeill on the early design of the Western Railroad? There is an expression that there is an Irishman



Union Pacific Railroad construction workers, taken in 1868. Online Images



Railroad workers shoveling out a cut.



The Celtic cross commemorating Duffy's Cut victims in West Laurel Hill Cemetery, PA.

buried under every tie on the railroad.

Irish workers were valued as top rate, but it was their free time employers had to worry about. They self-medicated their sore muscles and loneliness with alcohol. It relieved their suffering. Only it unleashed a host of brawling and intoxicated behavior in the men and boys who had no family around to be accountable to. Does it sound like the origins of frat house mischief? How prepared was the town constable to deal with this rowdy behavior? Undoubtedly the railroad contractor didn’t want to know about it and they certainly didn’t want responsibility



Irish stamps. Submitted photo by Deborah Daniels

for the workers bad behavior. Drunk and disorderly reputations were earned by the Irish workers.

So it was that the wild countryside was tamed with 150 miles of train track. It took two years to build without benefit of dynamite or machinery beyond shovels, pickaxes, and ox carts. This St. Patrick’s Day raise a toast to the fine labor of these Irish immigrants. Slainte.

Do you have a memory or historical curiosity from the Hilltowns that you’d like to share with your neighbors? Send your story and photos to countryjournal@turley.com.

Corrections policy

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# BLANDFORD

## HONORED CITIZEN



Selectboard Chair Cara Letendre and proclamation honoree Richard Barnard share an elbow bump as she presented him with the public decree. Barnard was honored for his volunteer work for the town on the Fire Department, the Planning Board, the Union Agricultural and Horticultural Society, aka the Blandford Fair, and his work on the Highway Department.

Photo by Mary Kronholm

## Grants open technology accessibility

By Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD – Select Board Chair Cara Letendre, clerk Eric McVey and member Tom Ackley reviewed the purpose of two grants awarded the town for the express purpose of helping senior citizens with internet access.

One grant through Baystate Medical can help eligible, qualified seniors obtain computers and the other will cover the \$99 fee for homeowners 65 and over. The \$99 is the one-time activation fee for taking broadband service. The Council on Aging and the Municipal Light Plant will contact residents regarding equipment and the activation fees. McVey asked for there be updates every two weeks.

Out of 178 senior-owned homes, there are 52 not signed up and McVey wanted to be sure the remaining have the opportunity and that the town can “meet the digital divide.” He praised the outreach efforts and asked about meeting the needs of younger people. He said the town has to “Try and take care of both ends of the spectrum.”

Anyone interested in signing up for broadband access can still do so by contacting MLP Chair Peter Langmore at

413-848-2816 or online at [whipcityfiber.com/Blandford](http://whipcityfiber.com/Blandford).

In other business, the select board received a notice of rate increase for Town Counsel KP Law

From \$190 to \$200 an hour. Letendre said the board would have to “be sure we have it in the budget.”

Police Chief Tammy Weidhaas notified the board of three abandoned firearms in the police department’s safe. The firearms had been in police possession for some time, years in fact, and Weidhaas will trade the firearms in for credit towards ammunition she needs for training officers. This is a customary practice

The board reviewed the job description for Highway Superintendent and approved it with a possible amendment regarding licenses a successful applicant must hold.

There will be a special town meeting March 22, rescheduled, March 25 the board will meet with the Finance Committee and conduct a budget hearing and on March 29 the MLP and finance team will meet to review broadband expenses and progress.

The board will meet next Monday, March 15, at 6 p.m.

# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMNS

## Cabbage conundrums

I always feel a bit guilty on St. Patrick’s Day. What kind of Irish girl am I if I don’t particularly like corned beef and cabbage? Most of my life I found the meat too salty and the cabbage... well, too cabbagey. The past couple of years, though, in an effort to help my gut microbiome replenish itself after too many Lyme antibiotics, I began taking an interest in fermented foods. Sauerkraut has become one of my favorites.

Last year I met a woman at a Grange talk who had a basement full of sauerkraut she made herself. Intrigued and always up for a homesteading challenge, I decided then and there that I was going to grow enough cabbage to fill my basement, too. The only problem was that I never had much success with this vegetable. Sure, I’ve enjoyed a homegrown head or two, but a cabbage farmer I am not. Thugs, slugs, bugs and cracks, in that particular order, have always thwarted my best efforts. Read on to learn about my experiences as I went from growing a half dozen cabbage plants to over 30.

I sowed my cabbage seeds indoors off heat the second week of April last

year. When the first true leaf appeared, I transplanted the seedlings into individual cells of six packs and watered with a liquid fertilizer diluted to half strength. Bright light but cool temperatures grew stocky plants, and by May 15 they were ready to be hardened off. They were installed into the garden a week before Memorial Day. Most of the plants went into one of my rock-edged

raised beds. I thought I was so smart. First I installed three-foot hardware cloth to keep out the bunnies (thugs), then I laid soaker hoses to and fro, knowing how these beds can bake in the heat and dry out daily. Cabbages aren’t what you would call heat-loving. If that wasn’t enough, I then covered the whole thing with a floating row cover, anticipating that the cabbage looper, the cabbage worm and the imported cabbage worm (all bugs) would visit and demolish my seedlings in no time. All my bases were covered, literally, and things were going great. The leaves began to pucker and curl: the seedlings

were on their way to making heads!

But alas, I began to notice holes in the leaves. The kind of holes where you can see a shiny trail. Slugs had found my cabbage patch. Sometimes there were even dark gray slugs still attached to the leaves. Big ones, little ones, yuck! I began hand picking furiously, every morning at sunrise and again just before

dark. Things finally began to look up and then the aphids (yet more bugs) hit. Did you ever see gray aphids in such an abundance that they look more like a waxy coating than individual bugs? Yessiree, that was my cabbage patch. I think, because this set-up of mine only required that I turn on the soaker hose and not lift the cover and inspect my plants, things got way out of control. Had I seen the first few aphids I could have maybe blown them off with a spray of water, or waited until evening and sprayed with soap to smother the buggers. But once heads form and the aphids are within the overlapping leaves,

you might as well call the party over and plant a cover crop instead. Live and learn.

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story. There were six cabbage transplants that I couldn’t fit in the raised bed. I planted them at the end of my broccoli row in the main garden. Although plagued with a few slugs, and even a few bugs, I was able to harvest each head and made my first ever batch of sauerkraut, totally just about two gallons worth! As my bounty dwindles near winter’s end, I am already strategizing this year’s cabbage crop. I am going to try growing an early variety to try and beat the worst of the bugs.

Although still not a fan of corned beef, cabbage has surely has found its place in my palate and in my garden.

Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [ekennedy@turley.com](mailto:ekennedy@turley.com) with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.*



ROBERTA MCQUAID  
TURLEY  
PUBLICATIONS  
COLUMNIST

## About working while collecting early Social Security benefits

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I will be 65 in August of this year. If I start drawing Social Security on my 65th birthday, how will my Social Security check be affected if I continue working at my full-time job, and take home \$1,380 every two weeks, until I reach my full retirement age? Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior: Social Security has an “earnings test” which applies to anyone who collects benefits before they have reached their full retirement age, or FRA. There is also a “first-year rule,” which applies when someone claims benefits mid-year, prior to their full retirement age. The first-year rule says that if you exceed a monthly limit you aren’t entitled to benefits for that month, and that applies for each remaining month in the first year, after your benefits start. Then, starting in 2022, you’ll be subject to an annual earnings limit. Since you will reach your full retirement age in 2022, your annual limit that year will be a bit more than the 2021

FRA-year limit of \$50,520 (the earnings limits change annually).

If you claim Social Security to start in August when you are 65, for the remainder of 2021 you’ll be subject to a monthly earnings limit of \$1,580. And if your gross earnings for each remaining month in 2021 are more than that, and yours would be, then you won’t be entitled to Social Security benefits for the remaining months of 2021. For clarity, you would also have the option to request that the annual limit (\$18,960 for 2021) be used instead of the monthly limit, but at your earnings level you would still be required to repay all of your 2021 benefits, using the annual limit would require you to repay \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit.

When you file your income taxes next year, Social Security will discover you exceeded the 2021 earnings limit and require you to repay all benefits received in 2021. By “repay,” I mean they will give you an option to repay everything they paid you in 2021 in a lump sum, or

### SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

they will withhold future benefits until they recover what you owe because you exceeded the monthly limit. Alternatively, you could request a less severe repayment plan, but you would need to negotiate that directly with Social Security.

Essentially, if you plan to continue working full time in 2021, it may be wise to simply delay claiming your Social Security for a while, because you will end up needing to return any benefits paid in 2021. You could still claim in August and then inform them you will exceed the limit; in which case they will simply withhold your benefits. But in any case, you won’t be eligible for Social Security benefits in 2021 at the earnings level you shared.

As explained above, your 2022 earnings limit will be more than the 2021 limit of \$50,520 for those achieving FRA, and if you claim benefits to start in January 2022 that higher annual limit would apply. If you’re still working full time at the same earnings level, you probably will not exceed the 2022 annual

limit, so your benefits wouldn’t be affected. But if you get a raise and exceed the 2022 limit, Social Security will want back \$1 for every \$3 you exceeded the limit by the FRA-year rate.

Of course, since the earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, you might also consider just waiting until your FRA to claim Social Security and completely avoid the earnings test.

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*Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*



RUSSELL

Celebrate spring with a story walk at Noble View Outdoor Center

RUSSELL — Celebrate spring by combining the pleasure of reading a wonderful children’s book aloud, with the joy of walking together outdoors.

The Hilltown Family Center and The Appalachian Mountain Club invite families to a story walk at Noble View Outdoor Center, located at 635 South Quarter Road in Russell. Pages of “It’s Spring” will adorn half-mile length of Mac Ross Trail. Simple text and bold, beautiful paper sculpture convey the animal life, plant life, weather, colors, clothing, and feelings associated with the spring season in this book by Linda Glaser.

The hike will conclude at Noble View’s 50-mile view vantage point overlooking Westfield and Springfield and beyond. Each registered child will receive a book to take home. Participants can walk back to the parking lot for a total distance just shy of a mile. Participants should dress for the weather. At this time, this trail is not handicapped accessible and is not suitable for strollers. While AMC Noble View allows pets on a leash, pets are not allowed on guided story walk tours. Rest rooms are not available at this time.

Three walks are offered on Sunday, March 28, at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. To register, visit [activities.outdoors.org](https://activities.outdoors.org). Please register for only one guided walk. Once parents register online, they should contact AMC hike leader [nancy@paddleforwater.net](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net) to register their children. They will receive a COVID-19 release that must be signed on behalf of each of the children. Registrants will affirm to adhering to all AMC Covid-19 protocols including wearing a mask and social distancing.

“It’s Spring” will remain on the trail

for self-guided story walks until the following Sunday, April 4. Families are invited to come at any time during daylight hours to walk the trail and read the book at your leisure during that week. No registration is required for self-guided story walking.

Please be aware that no restroom facilities are available at Noble View currently.

This story walk was generously funded by a Community Development Block Grant through the Town of Chester and in collaboration with the volunteers and resources of the Appalachian Mountain Club. There is no charge to participants for this story walk.

The Hilltown Family Center, located at 9 Russell Road in Huntington, houses many of the Hilltown Community Health Center’s community programs and services, and offers an extensive list of resources for parents, caregivers, and families. The Family Center programs are built around the belief in nurturing strong families, by helping them to strengthen their flexibility and resilience. Programs help families establish strong social connections and give concrete support in times of need, recognizing family’s strengths and understanding that being a parent is part natural and part learned. The Family Center also helps children connect and relate to their world. For more about the Hilltown Family Center please visit them on Facebook or at [hchcweb.org](https://hchcweb.org).

Founded in 1876 the mission of the Appalachian Mountain Club is to foster the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. They envision a world where our natural resources are healthy, loved, and always protected, and where the outdoors occupies a place



The Hilltown Family Center and Appalachian Mountain Club will host a story walk for “It’s Spring” by Linda Glaser on Sunday, March 28, at Noble View Outdoor Center.

Submitted photo

of central importance in every person’s life. The AMC’s Western Massachusetts Chapter carries out the AMC mission in the geographic region defined by the

four counties that comprise Western Massachusetts: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden. For more information, [www.amc-wma.org](https://www.amc-wma.org).

Ice fishing at Woronoco Heights Outdoor Adventures March 20

RUSSELL —Weather permitting on Saturday, March 20, the maple tree sap should once again be flowing for the Woronoco Heights Outdoor Adventures at the Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation in Russell.

Chuck Andrews and his family will be throwing open the doors to their Top O’ The Hill maple sugar house and offering tours of their facility, maple syrup, and treats for the WHOA visitors. Other anticipated events include the reopening of the hugely popular tomahawk range and, ice permitting, WHOA’s ice fishing staff will be on hand to aid participants in not letting “the big ones” get away. Fishing Director Craig Mannix and his crew will have on hand all the necessary tools and “pop-ups” for a successful day of ice fishing on the lake.

In the areas between the Maple Sugar House and ice fishing, WHOA visitors will find a plethora of additional adventures to try. Snowshoeing will be at the Manor House, once the summer residence of the camp’s benefactor Horace A. Moses. Those seeking other challenges may learn how to land navigate the old-fashioned way through the WHOA compass courses or jump back to the present and explore the demanding geocache course and try finding the camp’s



“evil hides.” Guests may also bang out their week’s frustrations pounding out a useful project from red hot steel in the blacksmith shop. WHOA Director Mia

Santos-Izyk reports there are activities available for people wanting to test their brains with WHOA’s escape room challenges or even participate in magic card

tournaments. Rounding out the day’s activities guests can fly a kite “up to the highest heights” and scavenge around for select items in the scavenger hunt bingo game.

Those who successfully find their assigned items and make BINGO will be eligible to win a WHOA t-shirt as well.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions the registration cost for all these activities remains at \$10 per person, regardless of age. The Feb. 20 activities all commence at 9 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Regarding the COVID-19 regulations, Santos-Izyk advises all participants and WHOA staff that various modifications to the usual WHOA programs are still in place.

Participants will be required to pre-register and prepay on-line at; [www.wmascouting.org/WHOA202101](https://www.wmascouting.org/WHOA202101). No walk-ins or onsite registrations will be permitted. Additionally, registrations will be limited, and participants may be asked to assemble into groups of 12 or fewer individuals. Typical social distancing will be practiced with mandatory face coverings required at all times whether outside or in enclosed areas.

A full list of WHOA’s COVID-19 modifications is available on its website at [www.wmascouting.org/WHOA](https://www.wmascouting.org/WHOA).



The Russell Public Library is equipped with a variety of great reads to welcome the arrival of spring.

Submitted photo

Spring into action at the library and find a good book to read

RUSSELL — Spring is here when the sounds of a cracking bat, the songs of a bullfrog, the laughter of reading silly words, and the sounds of a cheering crowd can be heard and found in the Russell Public Library’s selection of books displayed in the Children’s Library.

Some of the selection choices

are “Home Run” by Robert Burleigh, “And The Bullfrogs Sing” by David L. Harrison, along with “The Bippolo Seed and Other Stories” written by Dr. Seuss. Spring into action and find the book that fits best.

The library is open at its regular hours, or call 413-862-6221 to arrange a curbside pickup.



WORTHINGTON

RACE

from page 1

“My mom dropped me off. I had \$5 and it costs \$3 to get in,” Dodge said. “I bought a boss cap patch. My mom picked me up at 2 [p.m.] and I just wanted to stay all day...I was just a kid, but you remember it was a big thing.”

Jeff Leupold made the trip up to the races when he was 13 with his father and brothers in a 1966 Mustang, which he still owns today, from West Brookfield. The races helped foster a lifelong passion for snowmobile racing and collecting with Leupold’s collection today numbering about 130 sleds — including one that ran the snows of Worthington in 1971 — and the memories he still cherishes to this day.

“I remember being a little kid and there was a Polaris that came around the track and it hit a bump and went up in the air,” Leupold said. “I remember my dad grabbing me...and that the sled crashed. It was trashed.”

“There was no protection, no hay bales, nothing,” Dodge added. “If they crashed, you better get out of the way.”

Dodge, who now resides in Windsor, and Leupold didn’t know each other back then. It wasn’t until 2002, when a chance

job opportunity found the two men in the same cab for A&R Trucking; time filling chatter about hobbies revealed a common passion with a shared root.

Fifty years after the races, Dodge, Jalbert, and Leupold gathered with Ken Needham at Tom Brisson’s Stony Acre Farm on 105 Old Post Road, across the street from the Jones Lot. The men wanted to remember that iconic weekend five decades ago to the day as the anniversary aligned on the same two days of the week as the original races.

“This is a huge part of my youth,” said Dodge. “Jeff and I became best friends through snowmobiles.”

“This whole thing got me collect-

ing Chaparral sleds because the next year they made a sled inspired by Al and Bobby Unser,” Leupold said.

The event itself had a couple major scares leading up to the race before it could even happen. Laconia New Hampshire had a USSA scheduled race on Feb. 14, but moved it to March 6. However, USSA rules did not allow competitions within 150 miles of each other, and Worthington was only 134 miles away.

“The USSA looked into it. Worthington had it first,”

Jalbert said. “There were other races competing against it [for that weekend].”

The week before the race the town was hit by a “super thaw.” The snow

track turned into a mud field and part of it was eaten away a by the brook. With thousands of reservations, hotel bookings, and high anticipation for the big event, Jalbert remembers helping truck in ice and snow to lay down and create the track, with a little help from Mother Nature who delivered a blizzard in time for the race as well.

“You could see guys down here throwing snow and pounding at it,” Jalbert said.

Drivers came in early in the morning on Saturday, March 6, for registration with inspection at 10:45 a.m. Qualifying heats for the quarterfinals and beyond took place on Sunday. First place winners received \$1,100 at that time, with second place receiving \$500, third place \$250, and fourth \$150. The awards were presented at the Drummer’s Club in town.

Looking at the Jones Lot today, the reunion saw the field has stayed quite similar to the track they remember 50 years ago.

“It’s exactly the same contour as back then,” Dodge said as he looked out at the field.

“My mom dropped me off.  
I had \$5 and it costs \$3 to get in.  
I bought a boss cap patch.  
My mom picked me up at 2 [p.m.]  
and I just wanted to stay all day...  
I was just a kid, but you remember  
it was a big thing.”

– Bobby Dodge



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[www.route20barandgrille.com](http://www.route20barandgrille.com)  
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Sun 9am-7pm; Sunday breakfast 9am - noon

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WORTHINGTON



A 1971 Arctic Cat Panther sled.



A replica made of the poster advertising the races.



Tom Brisson, left, of Stony Acre Farm graciously hosted the small snowmobile reunion. Pictured, from left, are Brisson, Bobby Dodge, Ned Jalbert, Ken Needham, and Jeff Leupold.

Photos by Peter Spotts



A 1972 Ski-Doo Elan.



A 1971 Chaparral Executive.

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BECKET

First hilltown marijuana store opens doors

By Shelby Macri

BECKET — Main Street welcomed its newest storefront with the grand opening of the marijuana retail dispensary Canna Corner on Sunday, March 7.

The dispensary is located on 3235 Main Street in Becket next to two other businesses owned by local business owner Heather Anello. Anello said one of the main reasons for opening the dispensary was to help bring attention and customer around her two other businesses in town — the Route 8 Pub and Becket Liquors. The liquor store only serves alcohol and will be selling cigarettes soon after gaining the appropriate licenses, and both establishments went through a name change after being closed in August due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anello said she expected to be busy and was happy with the amount of people that came out.

“It was successful, wonderful, it was exactly what we were expecting,” Anello said. “My staff did well as some of them have experience and some didn’t, but we met our mark well before three like we

had predicted.”

Selectman Michael Lavery was among the customers visiting the shop on opening day.

“They are a small boutique cannabis store, but they have most of what the connoisseur would be looking for,” Lavery said. “I would like to see any small business thrive in town, and that includes cannabis businesses.”

Not only does the dispensary bring potential clientele, but it’s an industry that is expected to grow in the future. It is also an industry that Anello is already involved in; she runs Spencer House LLC as her license holding company that holds a provisional license in Chester for manufacturing and cultivation for Grow Chester. The construction of two buildings at 133 and 126 Middlefield Road in Chester is on track and Anello is looking forward to the progress of that project.

Anello is expecting warm weather coming with spring and the additional residents who come up for the summer will only add to the business at Canna Corner and her other businesses. She is following the strict laws and guidelines

for a cannabis company and retail dispensary, and is able to offer one-time use 10% discount to the Route 8 Pub after people make a purchase at Canna Corner. The certificate doesn’t go both ways as there are laws regulating cannabis and its sales prices, but it helps to bring attention to the rest of the businesses.

Canna Corner is the first neighborhood dispensary in the Berkshires; Anello is proud of this fact and believes the business will see a steady flow of customers now that it’s open. She believes people from surrounding towns will also visit Canna Corner as it’s the only retail dispensary open in the hilltowns at this time.

Lavery said the dispensary provide the town with a 3% community tax that can be used as the town sees fit. Lavery has a medical marijuana card and made a small purchase of CBD gummies in a way to support the new business. The only potential problem he foresees for the business is an increase in customers possibly resulting in proper security to manage the line and front area. He added this problem would be a good problem in

the sense that it’d be bringing revenue to the community.

“I try to remain open minded. There was a period of time in this country where alcohol was not permitted, during the prohibition era,” Lavery said. “I think that the last 40 or 50 years was an era where marijuana or cannabis was not permitted and now it is again.”

Anello and Lavery believe Canna Corner will prosper in the area it’s in and the clientele in the area. The shop is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day and patrons have to be 21 years or older with a legal Massachusetts ID to enter and purchase products.

Anello reminds patrons no cannabis items are allowed in the Route 8 Pub or the Becket Liquor Store, as all cannabis items are required to be fully packaged and safely stored in a vehicle before entering another business. This is in accordance with cannabis laws in the state and Anello is dedicated to keeping a close eye on how her business and clients operate to ensure safety and wellness for her business, her customers, and her community.

Community Preservation funding hearing to be held on March 17

BECKET — A public hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 17, at 6 p.m. via Zoom to discuss Community Preservation funding for fiscal 2022, including the extension of a commonly used trail in town.

Selectman Michael Lavery has plans to modify a commonly walked trail in town — the area is a part of Jacob’s Ladder where the trail goes straight back with a dead end — into the Esau’s Heel Trail. Lavery wants to add a loop at the end so people don’t have

to turn around at the end of the trail and Community Preservation funding could provide \$10,000 for the project.

The other two projects up for discussion at the hearing are \$21,887 for insulation and window insert project at the Becket Arts Venter and \$100,000 for repairs to the Congregational Church Belfry.

For a copy of the warrant and Zoom meeting login information for the March 17 hearing, visit [www.townof-becket.org](http://www.townof-becket.org).

Local student makes Dean’s List

BECKET — Samuel Polastri was named to the Dean’s list for the Fall 2020 semester at the State University of New York Delhi.

Polastri is pursuing a degree in

Construction Management: Design & Building. The dean’s list is a recognition of students who enrolled in six or more credits and earned a 3.5 or higher grade-point average for the semester.

MIDDLEFIELD

Rabies clinic open to all March 20

MIDDLEFIELD — All Hilltown dogs and cats are welcome to the Middlefield/Chester Rabies Clinic on Saturday, March 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Middlefield Town Hall on 188 Skyline Trail in Middlefield.

Dr. Sherry Holt will be the veterinarian. Please bring the current rabies certificate if possible. Shots will be \$20 per pet. Please bring a self-addressed stamped envelope and the new rabies

certificate will be mailed to the owner. Middlefield dog licenses will also be available.

This will be held outside as a drive-up event. Everyone will remain in their cars until directed otherwise. Masks are required and social distancing will be enforced.

Any questions may be directed to Middlefield/Chester Animal Control at 413-354-0975.

MIDDLEFIELD SENIOR CENTER

Lunch is served at the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, each Wednesday at noon.

A \$3 donation is suggested. Reservations should be made, and meal choice stated, by calling and leaving a

message at 413-623-9990 the Monday before. Pick-up and delivery are available. The menu on Wednesday, March 17, is savory corned beef, steamed cabbage and carrots, boiled red bliss potatoes, rye bread, and leprechaun cake.

CHESTER

Academic honor earned at BC

CHESTER — Rachel LeBarron of Chester received First Honors for the fall 2020 semester at Boston College. LeBarron is a senior Biology major.

Chester Theatre announces summer schedule

CHESTER — Chester Theatre Company is bringing its 2021 season, dubbed Chester@Hancock, to the Berkshires this summer. All three productions will be staged in a large tent on the grounds of Hancock Shaker Village. Guests can dine on site, walk the trails, and, for an additional fee, tour the Village, as well as attend performances.

This season marks CTC’s 32nd, and its sixth under Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer. Co-founded in 1990 by the former Artistic Director of Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC has grown in both scope and reputation in the past three decades.

“After a year in which we and our audience were kept apart from each other, I’m beyond excited that we can offer this season,” said Kramer. “The journey through these three plays is about our need to connect with one another, how difficult that can be to accomplish, and the deep satisfaction of how we sustain each other when we succeed.”

“Title and Deed”

“Title and Deed” by Will Eno and directed by Keira Naughton will take

place from June 16 through June 27. Eno’s script is bursting with moments that are simultaneously intriguing, amusing, and enigmatic. “Title and Deed” stars James Barry, known to CTC audiences for his work in “The Aliens,” “The Night Alive,” and “Sister Play.” Keira Naughton, who was nominated for a Berkshire Theatre Critics’ Award for 2019’s “Curve of Departure” returns to direct.

“The Niceties”

“The Niceties” by Eleanor Burgess will be performed from July 14 through July 25. Zoe, a Black student at an elite liberal arts college, is called into her white professor’s office to discuss her paper about slavery’s effect on the American Revolution. What begins as

a polite clash in perspectives explodes into an urgent debate about race, history, and power.

“Tiny Beautiful Things”

“Tiny Beautiful Things” by Nia Vardalos will be directed by Kramer and take the stage from Aug. 18 through Aug. 29. A celebration of the simple beauty of being human based on the “Dear Sugar” column written by Cheryl Strayed, “Tiny Beautiful Things” offers affirmation of love and loss, of pain and pleasure, of deep loneliness and shared humanity. It is the story of what people can feel and learn when they open up to each other, and to hearing answers they can’t figure out on their own.

For more information visit [chester-theatre.org](http://chester-theatre.org).



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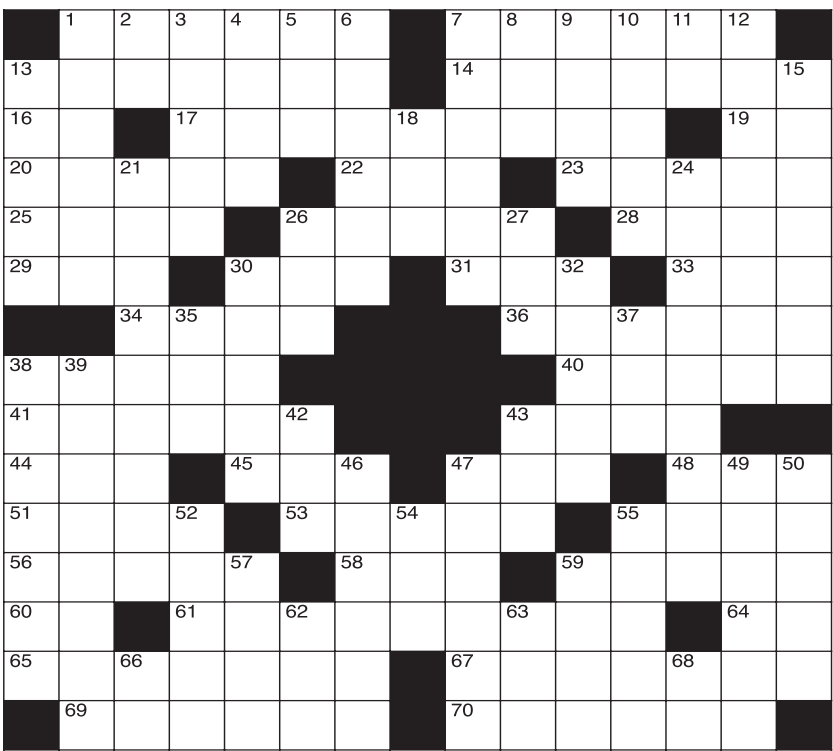


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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Large dung beetle

7. Representation of a plan

13. In a fervid way

14. The Book of Psalms

16. Morning

17. Exactly the same

19. About

20. Brown and basmati are two

22. Swiss river

23. Philippine island

25. Expressions of surprise

26. An ant

28. Common Japanese surname

29. Deoxyribonucleic acid

30. Car mechanics group

31. A person's brother or sister

33. Ancient pharaoh

34. Quantitative fact

36. Vividly colored bird

38. Your home has one

40. Organic compound

41. Section at the end of a book

43. Flat tableland with steep edges

44. Criticize

45. Split pulses

47. Brief trend

48. Cool!

51. Purposes

53. Brews

55. Skin condition

56. Pops

58. American air travel company

59. Minute bug

60. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)

61. One who rides in your car

64. One of the Gospels

65. City in southern Spain

67. Inquisitive

69. Jean Paul \_\_, author

**CLUES DOWN**

1. An ape or monkey

2. Chemical element

3. Zodiac sign

4. Removes

5. Brew

6. Nickname

7. Architectural structures

8. Trigonometric function

9. Postmodern architectural building in Vienna

10. Henderson and Fitzgerald are two

11. Mountain (abbr.)

12. Landscaping practice

13. Capacitance unit

15. Redirect

18. Hat for women

21. In a way, dressed down

24. Granny

26. Feed

27. Endpoint

30. Indian instrument

32. Bleated

35. Cablegram (abbr.)

37. Root mean square (abbr.)

38. Jellyfishes

39. Individual TV installments

42. Talk

43. More (Spanish)

46. Leaseholder

47. Monetary units

49. Hostility

50. Work stations

52. Linguistics giant

54. Female sheep

55. Calendar month

57. Seasoning

59. Lofty nest of a bird of prey

62. Single Lens Reflex

63. A way to remove

66. Virginia

68. Old English

# THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

**ARIES**  
Mar 21/Apr 20

This week some of the puzzle pieces in your life may not fit correctly. That's okay, Aries. You will find a way to make things work even if they don't exactly line up.

**CANCER**  
Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, your sensitivity is heightened this week, so you may need to think twice or even three times before you share your opinions. Cool down before becoming chatty.

**LIBRA**  
Sept 23/Oct 23

Dreams and fantasies are more than wishful thinking, Libra. They can be the catalysts to actual goals and plans if you let them. Start making your lists.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec 22/Jan 20

Playful emotions and daydreams are filling your days and nights, Capricorn. Why not let them come out in very real ways? Find ways to incorporate more fun into your life.

**TAURUS**  
Apr 21/May 21

Your thoughts may be focused on the spiritual for much of the week, Taurus. This is an opportunity to get in touch with meaningful things in your life.

**LEO**  
Jul 23/Aug 23

Figure out how you can organize your day to get things done with more efficiency, Leo. This is a better option than getting frustrated by a lack of time in your schedule.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you may be more attuned to your dreams this week. While they are not true predictions of what will happen, pay attention to any recurring themes.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan 21/Feb 18

If you have been taking someone for granted lately you can rectify that this week. Put this person first for a change and he or she may reciprocate in the future.

**GEMINI**  
May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, if things haven't been going as planned, perhaps it's time to re-evaluate some of your choices. Have confidence that you will find a solution that works.

**VIRGO**  
Aug 24/Sept 22

You may realize that the conventional ways of doing things simply are not working anymore, Virgo. Start thinking creatively rather than analytically.

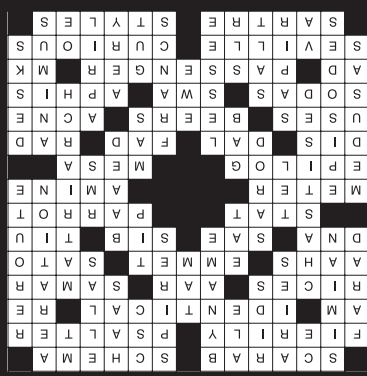
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov 23/Dec 21

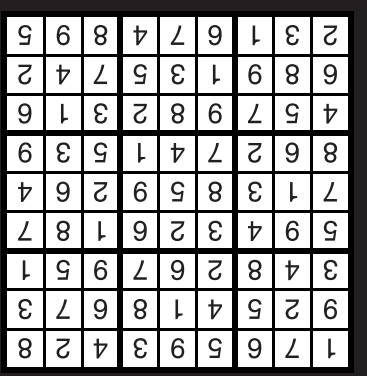
A drastic change may be coming but you don't know what that change will be just yet. Keep your eyes peeled for opportunities that may be on the horizon.

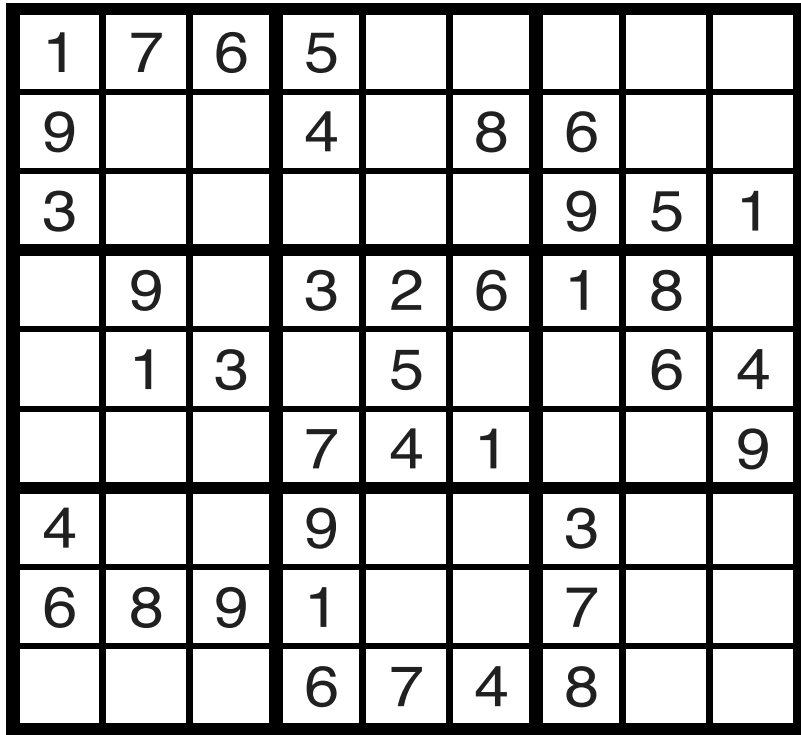
**PISCES**  
Feb 19/Mar 20

Always be truthful, Pisces. Just remember you cannot control how others may react to whatever it is you have to say.

**answers**







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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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WESTHAMPTON

COMPLEX

from page 1

town is one step closer to a better building for the Police and Fire departments.

Assistant Fire Chief and Public Safety Complex Building Committee Chair Steve Holt spoke about the need for this new building, including that the current building isn't up to code and the departments running from them can't operate correctly in those quarters. The exhaust is trapped in the garage as the fire trucks are started, although the garage doors are opened to air out the bay it doesn't get all traces out. The new building has a bigger bay and is up to code in every aspect; the Police Department has their own offices and separate garage to safety and correctly store evidence.

Additionally, it'd cost the town more money to try to bring the current building up to code and the departments still wouldn't have enough space needed for the new fire trucks and each department using the space. The new building offers extra office space on the second floor, rooms dedicated to the electric and the water for the building, as well as an Information Technology Department. Some space could be dedicated to the Highway Department later on as well.

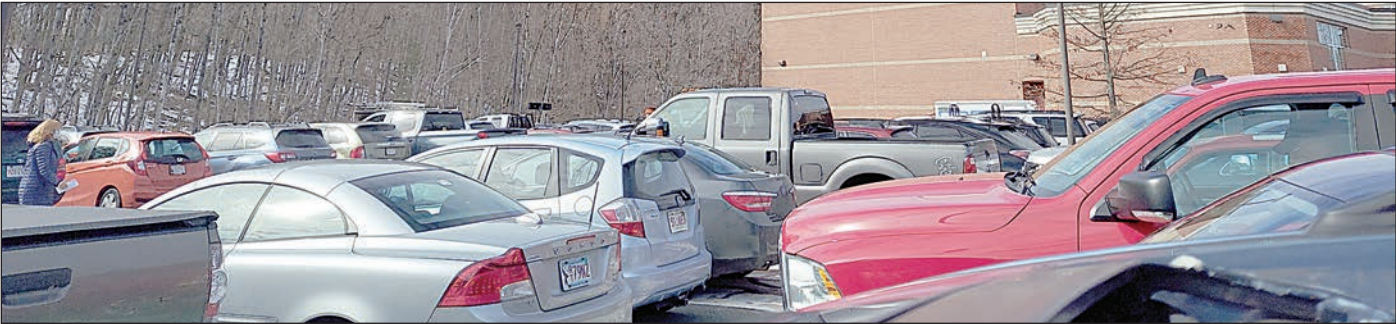
Dowling mentioned the 20-year history of this project, and spoke as the Capitol Improvement Planning Committee Chair about the project being on the capitol plan for years. This project won't increase the capitol budget and the town is in a good condition to build this complex now, prices are at an all-time low and the bids they've received are good for 90 days, so they need to get started to make the planned timeline happen. For the feasibility study, the design, and the bid the cost is nearly \$300,000 and construction is estimated to be \$4.2million, and is expected to be completed before next winter.

A few residents raised concerns about the country's financial standing and the economic impact the project



The Selectboard set up a small area at the corner of the Hampshire Regional Parking lot for the special town meeting on Saturday, March 7. Voters attended in their cars and could listen to the discussion over the radio. The meeting culminated with the public safety complex proposal getting approved.

Photos by Shelby Macri



Cars were parked side to side, with no spot left unfilled.

could ensue. They were concerned about the safety of the two buildings, compliance with OSHA and ADA regulations, construction contingency oversight, water supply, and revenue.

These concerns and questions were answered by Dowling, Holt, and Fire Chief David Antosz, who stepped up to the mic when specific concerns were brought up. Two part-time fire department employees spoke about the lack of safety and space in the current building and how a new space is needed for the safety of those who protect the town. They asked the people to allow the new building to go through as it's an important need.

Financial Committee Chair Mary Cleary also stepped up to the mic to address people's concerns about the cost

of the project and the state of the town's economics.

"We're ready and prepared for this project, we've been preparing since the last time it was proposed," Cleary said. "This is the best time for us to do this; not only are we ready and able to pay for this project, we need it."

Other arguments supporting the project included that renovations to existing structures are not cost saving, construction costs expected to increase or be more expensive if done later, current safety concerns, trimmed down design, and the timing of the project.

The special town meeting was held as a drive-up meeting to keep people safe during the ongoing pandemic. People were asked to wear masks if they wished to comment during the meeting.

For those parked further from the right-hand corner of the back lot where the Selectboard was set up, they were able to broadcast the meeting over a radio station so people could easily hear the meeting in their cars. Check-in took longer than expected, but dedicated volunteers helped to speed up the process by going down both sides of the cars with the meeting agenda and explaining the ballot cards.

Ultimately, voters supported of the project, allowing the town to go one step closer to actually building a new complex. While there was excitement for the outcome of the vote, it's not the end of the line yet. Residents will need to visit the Town Hall this Saturday, March 13, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the ballot vote, the final hurdle the project must pass.



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Kings Highway Bridge closes March 15

WESTHAMPTON — Effective March 1, Massachusetts DOT resumed construction at the Kings Highway Bridge. The bridge will be closed weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. The bridge

will reopen each evening and weekends and will be open during snow events until: Effective Monday, March 15, the bridge will be closed for the duration of construction; plan for alternate routes.

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WILLIAMSBURG

Caucus meets Saturday, March 13 for nominations

WILLIAMSBURG — The Annual Town Caucus will be held on Saturday, March 13 at 1 p.m. at the Highway Garage, 24 Main Street. The purpose of the Caucus is to nominate the names of people to run for elected positions on the May ballot.

The following positions will be on be on the ballot listed with the person currently in that seat. All posi-

tions are three-year terms unless otherwise stated. The positions include: Assessors, Denise Banister; Board of Health, Gordon Luce; Board of Library Trustees, Joan Coryat and Ken Borden; Board of Library Trustees, one-year term, Fred Goodhue; Elector-Oliver Smith Will, one-year term, Eric Cerreta; Finance Committee, Eric Cerreta, Charles Dudek, and Julia

Peters; Local School Committee, Marissa Nya; Moderator, one-year term, Paul Rudof; Recreation Commission, Collin Black; Regional School Committee, Paul Kennedy; Board of Selectmen, William Sayre; Trust Fund/Cemetery Commission, Eric Weber; Water/Sewer Commission, Roger Bisbee.

The Caucus traditionally is a fairly

quick event. In order to keep everyone safe, it will be held in the largest bay of the Highway Garage, chairs will be placed six feet apart and the bays will be left open to the outside. Wear clothes appropriate for the outdoors and come nominate the elected officials. The town need s40 people to reach a quorum, so please come participate in Town Government.

PSC

from page 1

lot where the Highway Department is housed.

“Primarily, the site is not quite large enough to host another large function on it as well as the driveway not being owned by the town,” OPMSC member Dan Bonham said. “And the pretty strong belief most of the land there is backfill on a bit of a swamp so structural stability is unreliable.”

Paul Fenn asked about the possibility of repairing or renovating the existing police and fire stations. OPM Rob Todisco explained the issue the town has is the cost to bring the buildings up to code was not feasible and there isn’t space to expand them to accommodate trucks and equipment.

“If the committee deems fire station inadequate because of the need for a larger parking spot for a bigger truck, has the committee explored options to park the truck at the big and underutilized nearby parking lot surrounding the bank?” asked Fenn.

Chairman Jim Ayres said the committee didn’t look into those avenues as it didn’t seem feasible and would require a private entity to give the town land. He also said the town has a history of kicking the can down the road, causing issues to stack up and never be fully fixed.

“A lot of what we’ve done as a town is put duct tape on things...and find a way to get by,” he said. “I think we’re at a point where that’s coming back to bite us... We could do something that’s

piecemeal...but my personal read of the Town Meeting a year ago is a consensus that’s not what we want to do. The funding to look at these three scenarios passed by a pretty generous margin. My takeaway from that is the town saying this is a problem and we need to look at long term solution.”

The committee looked at three options — incorporating some public safety functions into the HEJ building, building a separate structure next to the school, or removing the school and building in its place — ultimately deciding the cost was too prohibitive for the first two options, at \$7.5 million and \$6.5 million, respectively. Removing the James School is estimated at \$5.1 million.

The committee added it’s also a favorable time to go out to bid with contractors looking to get projects on the books for next year, making this most likely the cheapest chance the town will get at this project.

“We feel its beneficial that this project gets into that market as soon as possible,” Todisco said. “If this project were approved by town meeting in April, we’d be projected to go out to bid by the summer before the fall and get started building before next winter.”

“We feel for cost it is important to take advantage of the best interest rates and get on a construction firm’s schedule for work to begin in the fall if the town approves us to move forward,” added Town Administrator Charlene

Nardi. “We are targeting to go out to bid in late summer. In order to do that we need three to four months after final vote by the town and approval of the loan to finish the design to be put out to bid.”

Finance Committee Chairman Paul Wetzel added the town does have a cost by doing nothing — it costs \$41,000 annually to heat and insure the HEJ building, even with minimal people using it. It also currently needs a new roof and other work.

In response to questions about potentially selling the HEJ building to another contractor for them to renovate it, the committee said there’s a non-existent market as the building requires more than \$2 million just to get up to code.

Heidi Johnson asked if the HEJ property will work for trucks pulling out into the road and potential traffic issues.

“Have traffic considerations been made for when there is a call for the fire dept - in regard to the lack of sightline for East bound traffic?” she asked. “If Eastbound traffic is stopped by the general store, with trucks barreling down Route 9, it can be a problem.”

“I talked to Chief Connell, he said actually they do run a truck through there every once in a while, and they’ve never had any issues,” Architect Kevin Chrobak said.

Julia Peters inquired about ways to get more information out to people who haven’t attended the informational sessions, but are having discussions on

Facebook and other places.

“Is there consideration of a public meeting that could be outdoors later in the spring, or a recorded message prior to the next meeting to remind all of attendance?” she said.

Nardi said in addition to Zoom information meetings, the OPMSC has also spent Saturdays at four different locations around town to engage residents, share information and answer questions.

“We also have taken all the questions asked on the two Facebook community forums and written up answers to them,” she said. “We have been working on this for several decades, but it has been a conversation in town and we have had active public committee meetings for the last six years.”

The recommendation to remove the HEJ building and constructing a public safety complex will come before the town for a vote on Saturday, April 3, at 2 p.m. behind the Anne T. Dunphy School and require a two-thirds vote to pass.

There will be another informational session hosted by the OPMSC on Saturday, March 20, at 10 a.m. via Zoom. For more information and documents answering the most frequently asked questions about the project, visit [burgy.org](http://burgy.org).

There will then be an all-day vote from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to debt exclude the borrowing on Monday, April 19, at the Town Offices. That requires a majority vote to pass.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

FAILURE

from page 1

failures — In 2018-19 there were 88 in the first quarter, 155 in the second quarter; in 2019-2020 there were 82 in the first quarter and 175 in the second quarter.

“I did want to point out that although our failure rate is still higher than it typically is the, the gap between what we typically expect and what is happening this year is lessening,” Smidy said. “I think that is due to a number of factors, including like teachers really getting in the groove of our schedule our model... So, I think the fact that alone that this is decreasing a significant but also that it’s closer to what we expect is important.”

Smidy also looked at cohort data, but pointed out the school made a shift to hybrid learning models during the middle of the Second quarter, s numbers are not a complete reflection of the changes. For students in the hybrid model, 15% failed a course. In the students who opted to continue remaining in the remote model the failure rate was 17.6%, slightly lower than the first quarter’s 18% failure rate for the student body as a whole.

“I don’t have data for quarter one because we only had one cohort who was in person at that time, which was our seventh grade,” Smidy said. “And this is also a little bit unclear because as you can recall we transitioned to this hybrid model partway through the quarter, so it’s not purely Second quarter because we did transition a little bit into quarter two, so I just want to make sure that is clear on those numbers.”

Committee member Paul Marcinek

from Goshen asked Smidy if the failure rates are showing a correlation with attendance rates. Smidy said the issue is more students are signing into the remote classes, but are not always engaged with the learning and material.

“What we’re finding is that students will log on, but may not be engaged in the class content so they may be watching a movie or playing video games or texting with their friends or just completely lost,” she said. “It’s the engagement piece for the students that are failing has been challenging.”

While the failure rates are still higher than past years, a decrease in the overall total is encouraging as interventions are working and the school continues to adjust to help more students. Smidy said current academic interventions will remain in place including accepting assignments late, providing clarity for weekly assignments and due dates, credit recovery over break, and counseling and COVID Support check-ins.

Additional interventions being implemented included staff supported credit recovery over April vacation with an in-person component available to students; students will be able to earn half credit for year-long classes; robust Credit recovery options will be available to students over the summer and next academic year; and full day support offered to most at-risk students.

“I’m hoping that quarter three when there is that bigger sense of urgency will actually have staff on site to support

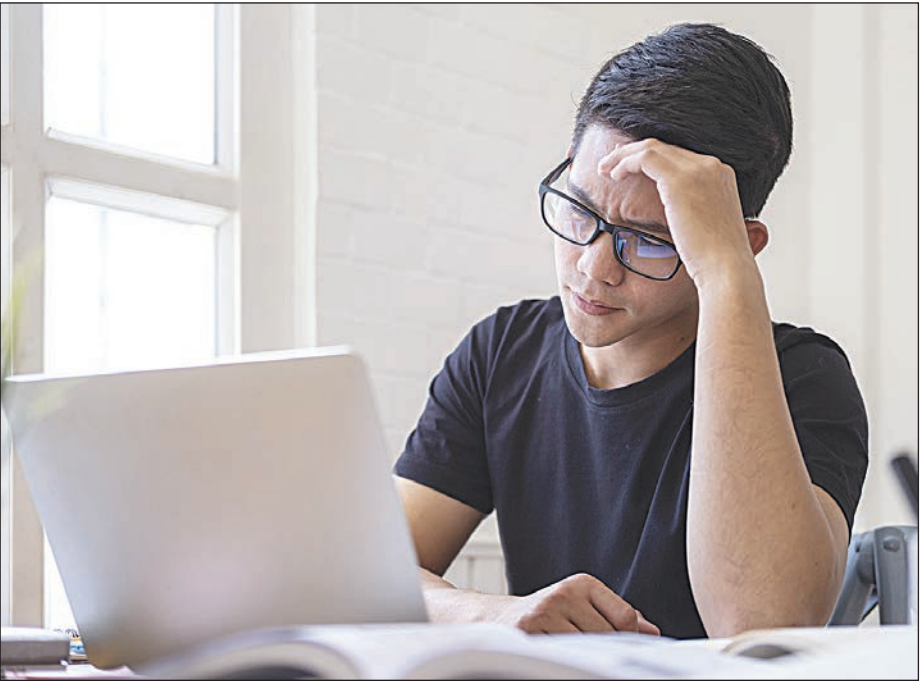
kids and we can have students come to the building to do their credit recovery because I think motivation is a concern as well,” Smidy said.

The school was disappointed with the amount of credit recovery options students took advantage of after the first quarter, but with partial data from the second quarter Smidy is encouraged there is promising.

“We don’t have the data completely done because teachers still have a little time to assess the work, but out of the 27

classes that were reported 11 have recovered credits and 15 did not turn in work and one turned in work but didn’t recover credit,” she said. “That data alone is much better than our quarter one data, but we’ll see.”

The school will continue to diligently monitor students’ academic progress as more data for the hybrid model comes in and adjust interventions and supports to help all students to succeed during what has been a difficult year of learning during the pandemic.





OBITUARIES

Rita R. Bancroft

Rita R. Bancroft passed away on Feb. 25, 2021. She is survived by her husband of 52 years Merrill Bancroft of Townsend, beloved sister Janet Mae Filpi, two brothers, Frank & the late William Liebenow, and extended relatives.

Rita was born in Cummington, MA, attending Wahconah Regional High School, graduating with honors. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree in History at Barrington College she attended Rhode Island School of Library Science and Fitchburg State College, earning her master’s degree in Education and Reading.

Rita worked many years as School Media Director in Fitchburg and other schools in Massachusetts. She continued this as a volunteer in local public schools and the Christian School at the First Baptist Church of West Townsend. She participated in the Women of the Word

and Heart to Heart Bible Study at Pepperell Christian Fellowship during employment and into retirement.

Her many interests included gardening, reading, scrapbooking and photography. She sold or gave to friends as gifts many of her scenic photos as enlargements or stationery. Her family and friends remember her as generous and creative, who loved all the beauties of the Lord’s creation.

Contributions in Rita’s memory may be made to Pepperell Christian Fellowship, P.O. Box 192 Pepperell, MA 01463 or at [www.pcfchurch.org/give](http://www.pcfchurch.org/give). She will be buried in Chesterfield, MA with a Celebration of Life Service for the immediate family and friends at a future time.

Arrangements entrusted to the McGaffigan Family Funeral Home, Pepperell, MA. Please see [www.mcgafiganfuneral.com](http://www.mcgafiganfuneral.com) for online memorial.

Stanley C. Gregson Sr.

Stanley C. Gregson Sr. passed away in the hospital on Feb. 26, 2021. He was born on Feb. 23, 1953 in Westfield. He worked at Strathmore Paper Company for 20 years as a paper maker. Stan was a member of the First Methodist Church in Westfield; he enjoyed fishing, collecting, classic tv shows and jokes. He was well known for his distinct brand of humor.

Sadly, he was predeceased by his sister Katherine Nicol in 1993, his ex-wife Joyce



Gregson in 2001, his father Clyde Gregson in 2004, his mother Adeline D. (Assels) Gregson in 2020, and his brother in-law Kenneth “Kenny” Bean in 2021. He is survived by his son Stanley Gregson, Jr. of Wilbraham and his siblings Dorothy G. Mazella and her husband Thomas of Huntington, and Doreen A. Bean of Sun City West, AZ.

A service or get together will be held in the future when family travel and current conditions allow. He will be loved and missed.

DEATH NOTICES

BANCROFT, RITA R.

Died Feb. 25, 2021  
Services to be held at later date.

GREGSON, SR., STANLEY C.

Died Feb. 26, 2021  
Services to be held at later date

Country Journal  
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

*Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.*

PUBLIC NOTICES

Community Outreach Meeting  
Canna Testing LLC

Notice is hereby given that Canna Testing LLC will host a Community Outreach Meeting to discuss the proposed siting of the Marijuana Independent Testing Lab at 241 Route 20, Chester MA 01011 in accordance with Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission’s regulation 935 CMR 500.00. The meeting will be held **Thursday, MARCH 18, 2021 at 6:00PM.**

The meeting will be held on Zoom conference due to Covid Regulations.

Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83852159385?pwd=aVZna0dhUHh2MmVld1czgw3VDW-WJTQT09>

Passcode: Testing  
03/04, 03/11/2021

Community Outreach Meeting for Pudding Hill Farm LLC, cannabis cultivation microbusiness.

DATE: March 26, 2021

TIME: 5:30 pm

PLACE: via ZOOM

DETAILS: Zoom Meeting ID 849 808 0166 Zoom passcode AqmMK8

SUBJECT: cannabis cultivation microbusiness start-up, 250sf indoor barn operation

LOCATION: Home of pudding hill farm, 1 Julius Hall Road, Blandford, MA  
03/11/2021

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 72 Bliss Street, Florence (Northampton), MA 01062

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Jeremy Hewat and Debra Wolohan

to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Eastern Bank, and now held by **Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency**, said mortgage dated March 30, 2006 and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 8663, Page 244, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Eastern Bank to Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency by assignment dated August 30, 2018 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 13085, Page 62; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on April 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

A tract of land, with the buildings thereon, located on the Easterly side of Bliss Street in the Village of Florence, in said Northampton, more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at the Northwestern corner of the granted premises at a stone bound on the Easterly side of Bliss Street; thence running

EASTERLY along land now or formerly of one Connors a distance of two hundred fifteen (215) feet, more or less, to an iron pin, which iron pin marks the Northeastly corner of the tract herein described, the Southeastly corner of said land of Connors, the Southwestly corner of land now or formerly of one Westort, and the

Northwesterly corner of land now or formerly of Robert Dunn, formerly of one Januskiewicz; thence proceeding

SOUTHERLY along land of said Dunn a distance of eighty-four (84) feet, more or less, to an iron pin; thence proceeding

WESTERLY along land now owned by Wade a distance of two hundred fifteen (215) feet, more or less, to an iron pin on the Easterly side of Bliss Street; thence proceeding

NORTHERLY along the Easterly side of Bliss Street a distance of eighty-one (81) feet, more or less, to the stone bound at the place of beginning.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES conveyed in a deed from Ricki Ellen Kantrowitz and Allan Steven Kantrowitz to Jeremy Hewat and Debra Wolohan, dated March 17, 2006, recorded with the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds on March 30, 2006, at Book 8663, page 242.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor’s Title see deed dated March 17, 2006 and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 8663, Page 242.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the

purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer’s or cashier’s check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer’s or cashier’s check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC  
1080 Main Street, Suite 200  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
Attorney for Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency  
Present Holder of the Mortgage  
401-217-8701  
03/11, 03/18, 03/25/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD21 P0401 EA  
Estate of:  
Lillian M Howe  
Date of Death: 02/23/2020  
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Roger R Howe** of Westfield, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Roger R Howe** of Westfield, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/02/2021.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 05, 2021

**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate

03/11/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court**

**Hampden Division  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD20P1583EA**

Estate of:

**Richard S Stomski Jr**

**Also Known As:**

**Richard S Stomski**

**Date of Death:**

**07/10/2020**

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Stuart M Caputo** of Worthington, MA a will has been admitted to informal probate.

**Stuart M Caputo** of Worthington, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 03/11/2021

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QUABBIN & SUBURBAN – FRIDAY AT NOON

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21	22	23	24
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29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40

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# REGION

## COVID-19 vaccines can result in false positive mammograms

SPRINGFIELD – Women and the COVID-19 vaccine are back in the news again.

First it was the question as to whether pregnant women should get the vaccine, now the concern is over mammograms and the effects the COVID vaccines may play in imaging, which can result in false positives.

Since the first of the COVID-19 vaccines began to roll out in late December, radiologists across the country have seen an increase in abnormal mammograms which showed swollen lymph nodes.

“The presence of swollen lymph nodes, although rare, on a mammogram could be a sign of breast cancer requiring an additional exam or even a biopsy. When women receive a callback after a mammogram, it can be quite anxiety producing, but usu-

ally doesn’t mean cancer,” said radiologist Dr. Jennifer Hadro, medical co-director of breast imaging at Baystate Health.

To save women the anxiety over a possible false positive, the Society of Breast Imaging released the following statement: “If possible, and when it does not unduly delay care, consider scheduling screening exams prior to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination or four to six weeks following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination.”

“Swollen lymph nodes on the side of the injection are not unusual after being vaccinated against other viruses such as the flu and may actually be a good sign. Their presence is an indication that the vaccine is likely doing its job and your body is beginning to build up an immuni-

ty to the virus,” Hadro said.

Women with irregular results on their mammogram will need a follow-up after their second dose of the vaccine in order to be certain that the inflammation was nothing more than a side effect to the vaccine.

“The recommendations above apply to screening mammography only, meaning women without any concerns such as a lump or other breast changes. We know that mammograms save lives, and if your doctor has ordered a mammogram as a precaution after feeling a lump or other concern, it’s important to keep that appointment even if you have been vaccinated in the past four to six weeks,” said Hadro.

For more information about Baystate Health, visit [baystatehealth.org](http://baystatehealth.org).

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